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ABSTRACT

The aim of Goal 1.4, an objective of the Albuquerque (New Mexico) Public Schools for 1986-87, is to make literacy a major focus for students identified as needing special assistance. It was planned to increase the scores on standardized tests for identified students. Those scoring below the 32nd percentile (40th NCE) on the reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, language mechanics, or language expression areas of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills in grades 5 and 8 became the focus of skills reinforcement instruction. A total of 1,360 students in grade 8 and 1,519 in grade 5 were identified in the fall of 1986. Gains by spring of 1987 for these students were computed and displayed in four tables. The average gains ranged from 5.2 to 11.6. That the average gain exceeded the target of Goal 1.4 and was statistically significant can be attributed to teachers targeting those students with lower scores and providing instruction in deficit areas. (SLD)



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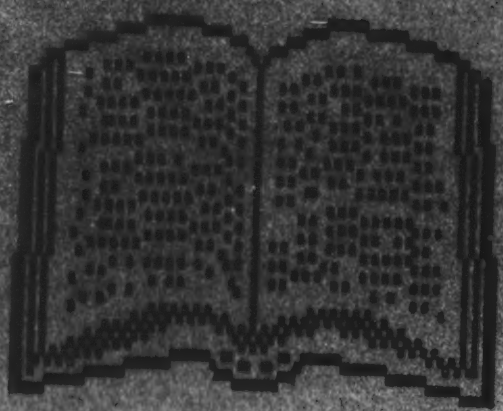
# Evaluation of Goal 1.4



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Evaluation of Goal 1.4
1986-87

The Albuquerque Public Schools Goals and Objectives for the 1986-87 school year included the objective 1.4:

> To make literacy a major focus for students who have been identified as needing special assistance in this area. Students who score below the 40th NCE on district-wide standardized tests will reflect an average growth of at least three NCE points between last time tested and spring 1987.

Literacy can be defined as "the ability to read and write." Each spring the Albuquerque Public Schools administers the CTBS to all third, fifth, and eighth grade students. Two subtests on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) measure a student's ability to read: Reading Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension. The Language Mechanics and Language Expression subtests measure a student's ability to understand the rules of writing. Language Mechanics measures punctuation and capitalization skills, while Language Expression measures skills in language usage and sentence structure.

To facilitate work with students regarding objective 1.4, Planning, Research, and Accountability (PRA) requested from Data Services a listing of all fifth and eighth grade students, by school, who scored at or below the 40th NCE (32nd percentile) in the areas of Reading Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, Language Mechanics, or Language Expression on their most recent CTBS tests. For the fifth grade students, 1985 (third grade) scores were used, and for the eighth grade students, 1984 (fifth grade) scores were used to determine which students needed reinforcement of skills relating to literacy. Once the students were identified, their names and CTBS scores on each of the four subtests were sent to the schools, in the fall of 1986. In the spring of 1987, the CTBS was once again administered to all third, fifth, and eighth grade students.

The spring, 1987 CTBS scores were compared to the previous scores to measure the progress of those fifth and eighth grade students who had been identified. A total of 1360 eighth grade students and 1519 fifth grade students were identified in the fall of 1986. The NCE gain for these students from the initial CTBS scores to the spring, 1987 CTBS scores was computed. The average gain was then calculated for each of the targeted groups in both grade levels on each of the four subtests on the CTBS which are related to literacy. The results of these analyses are displayed in tables one to four.

Table 1

CTBS Scores in READING VOCABULARY in NCEs

| | Grade 5 (n=899) | Grade 8 (n=891) |
|---|---|---|
| Average NCE in 1987 | 38.8 | 35.2 |
| Average NCE in 1984, 1985 | 29.8 | 30.0 |
| Average Gain | 9.0 | 5.2 |

Table 2

CTBS Scores in READING COMPREHENSION in NCEs

| | Grade 5 (n=907) | Grade 8 (n=735) |
|---|---|---|
| Average NCE in 1987 | 40.4 | 36.4 |
| Average NCE in 1984, 1985 | 33.0 | 30.6 |
| Average Gain | 7.4 | 5.8 |

Table 3

CTBS Scores in LANGUAGE MECHANICS in NCEs

| | Grade 5 (n=719) | Grade 8 (n=779) |
|---|---|---|
| Average NCE in 1987 | 42.4 | 40.5 |
| Average NCE in 1984, 1985 | 30.8 | 29.3 |
| Average Gain | 11.6 | 11.2 |

Table 4

CTBS Average Gain Scores in LANGUAGE EXPRESSION in NCEs

| | Grade 5 (n=966) | Grade 8 (n=831) |
|---|---|---|
| Average NCE in 1987 | 40.9 | 40.7 |
| Average NCE in 1984, 1985 | 30.6 | 30.3 |
| Average Gain | 10.3 | 10.4 |

The gains, which ranged from 5.2 to 11.6, show that the average gain in NCEs was larger than the target stated in objective 1.4. It is interesting to note that for the eighth grade students, the language mechanics and language expression gain scores were double the gain scores in reading vocabulary and reading comprehension. One of the possible explanations for this large gain is the nature of the two subtests. Both language subtests measure an application of rules of language. When teachers target and teach skills in an identified area of deficit, test scores are likely to increase.

Paired t-tests were used to determine if there was a significant gain between previous testing and the spring, 1987 CTBS testing. Results indicate that for both grades five and eight, the difference in mean scores between the two testing dates were significant at the .05 level for all subtests. This indicates that the gain can be attributed to factors other than chance. In this case, it is likely that the significant gain can be attributed to teachers targeting those students with lower scores, and providing instruction in the deficit areas. These results demonstrate that objective 1.4 has been met and exceeded by the progress of both the fifth and eighth grade students who had been identified.